

REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of October 18, 2006.

Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

The Office Action

Claims 1-7 and 13-16 remain in this application.

Claims 8-12 are cancelled.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, and 16 are allowed.

Claims 2, 4, 6, and 8-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,810,346 to Jorg, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,100,116 to Graushar and U.S. Patent No. 5,634,636 to Jackson, et al.

For the reasons outlined below it is submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the acknowledgement of the allowability of claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 16.

Claim 13 has been placed in independent form and now recites a system including a plurality of printers, a plurality of sheet processing systems, and a multifunction printed sheets interface system which comprises a generally planar sheet feeding table larger than the dimensions of any sheet to be fed thereon for simultaneous variable transport of a plurality of sheets thereon. The system includes a plurality of sheet input areas which receive printed sheets from the plurality of printers. Each of the printers feed printed sheets to a respective one of the sheet input areas. A plurality of sheet outputs areas provide plural outputs to different ones of the sheet processing systems. First and second of the sheet input areas are positioned relative to first and second of the sheet outputs areas such that a path of a sheet transported between the first input area and the first outputs area crosses a path of a sheet being transported between the second input area and the second outputs area. The system further includes a sheet position sensing system, and a sheet transporting system. The sheet transporting system provides selectable sheet translation to selectively transport sheets simultaneously from selected ones of the sheet input areas to selected ones of the sheet outputs areas so as to provide simultaneous

selectable sheet feeding from selected printers to selected sheet processing systems, including contemporaneous feeding in the crossing paths.

Support for the amendments to claim 13 are to be found in FIGURE 1 which shows sheets being contemporaneously fed in crossing paths, and in paragraph 11 of the specification.

The Examiner suggests that it would have been obvious to employ spaced, independently operable sheet transports in the system and method of Jorg in view of Graushar and Jackson. These references were discussed in a prior response.

In the system of Jackson, the air flow is used for correction of minor discrepancies in the position, orientation, etc., of the paper. The paper is constrained to move in the same general direction by sidewalls which are closely spaced from the paper path. There is no suggestion in any of the references for selectable sheet translation to selectively transport sheets from selected sheet input areas to selected sheet output areas so as to provide selectable sheet feeding from selected printers to selected sheet processing systems contemporaneously along crossing paths. Rather Jackson teaches against such a system by constraining the movement of the sheet along a single path.

Nor is there any suggestion in any of the other references as to how sheets could be contemporaneously fed with the system of Jackson along crossing paths.

Accordingly, it is submitted that there is no motivation for combining Jackson with Graushar and Jorg, and that claim 13 is patentable.

Claim 14 now recites a method comprising printing sheets on a plurality of printers, feeding the printed sheets from the plurality of printers to a plurality of spaced respective input areas, each of the plurality of input areas being adjacent a side of a planar printed sheets interface system, and transporting the printed sheets in the plane with a plurality of sheet transports from the input areas to selected spaced output areas, each of the output areas being adjacent a side of the planar printed sheets interface system. A sheet transported in the plane between a first of the input areas and a first of the outputs areas crosses a path of a sheet being contemporaneously transported between a second of the input areas and a second of the outputs areas.

The combination of Jackson with Graushar and Jorg does not suggest a planar sheets interface system in which sheets may be transported contemporaneously along

crossing paths.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 14, and claim 15 dependent therefrom, distinguish over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 1-7 and 13-16) are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

No additional fee is believed to be required for this Amendment G. However, the undersigned attorney of record hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the issue fee, to Xerox Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he is hereby authorized to call the undersigned, at Telephone Number (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

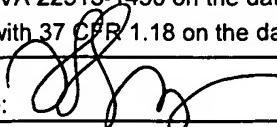
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November 29, 2006

Date

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